The Death of good Men, in the midſt of their Days, conſidered and improved.

A

Funeral SERMON

For the late Reverend

Mr. *SAMUEL HARVEY*,

Who deceaſed *April* 17, 1729. In the 31ſt Year of his Age.

Preach'd at

CROUCHED-FRYERS,

APRIL 27.

With ſome Enlargements;

And the Epitaph, Corrected, by Dr. *Watts*.

By *W. HARRIS*, D. D.

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W. Musgrave.

PSAL. cii. 23, 24.

He weakeneth my ſtrength in the way, he ſhortneth my days: I ſaid, O my God, take me not away in the midſt of my days, for thy years are throughout all generations.

THIS pſalm, without the name of its author, is entitled, *The prayer of the afflicted when he is overwhelmed, and poureth out his complaint before the Lord.* It was probably compoſed at the end of the Babyloniſh captivity, or ſoon after the Jews return to their own country, when the temple lay in ruins; and the building of it met with great obſtruction. This occaſioned many mournful reflections and complaints; as he ſometimes encourages himſelf in the hopes of God's faithfulneſs to his promiſe, and the honour it would be to his name in the eyes of the Gentile world.

The words I have read are of the former kind. *He weakneth my ſtrength in the way, he ſhortneth my days:* The ſtrength of nature began to fail in the midſt of life: God ſeemed to threaten an immature death, and before the ordinary courſe of nature. This put him upon this prayer to God; *O God, take me not away in the midſt of my days: q. d.* with relation to the caſe he had in view; " I hoped " to have lived to ſee the finiſhing of the " temple, and that I had been in a fair way " to it; but the great oppoſition made to it,

" and the great decays I find in my ſelf, make
" me fear I ſhall fail of the pleaſing hopes:
" take me not away before it is complete, but
" ſuffer me to live to ſee thy promiſe fulfilled.

What the Pſalmiſt here had only the apprehenſions of concerning himſelf, is ſometimes actually the caſe with other good men: *He weakneth their ſtrength in the way*, and *ſhortens their days*, and *takes them away in the midſt of their days.* Nothing is more affecting to conſidering minds, and more dark and unaccountable in preſent providence, than when eminently good and uſeful perſons are removed in early life, while wicked and uſeleſs perſons are ſpared to old age. It carries ſomething ſtrange in its appearance, and is contrary to nature. That old perſons die, worn out with ſervice, and decays of nature, is no wonder, and a leſs loſs to the world; that is agreeable to the courſe of nature, and what every one expects. But when younger perſons are cut off in the midſt of their days, and the height of their uſefulneſs, richly furniſhed, and ripe for ſervice, like bloſſoms nip'd in the tender bud, which promiſed much fair fruit, *When one dies in his full ſtrength, and wholly at eaſe, while their breaſts are full of milk, and their bones of marrow:* this naturally ſtrikes the mind with ſurprize and aſtoniſhment; and we are apt not only to grieve at the loſs, but to be ſhocked at the appearance, and puzzled at the diſpenſation; and to ſay with the Pſalmiſt on the like occaſion; *The days of his youth haſt thou ſhortned; remember*

Job xxi. 23.

Pſ. lxxxix. 45, 47.

how

how ſhort my time is——. *Wherefore haſt thou made all Men in vain!* I believe you are all beforehand with me in this reflection upon this melancholy occaſion; and I thought I could not more properly improve it, than by the conſideration of this ſubject. I ſhall only propoſe,

I. To enquire into the reaſons of this diſpenſation, and conſider what account can be given of it.

II. To direct to the proper improvement, and ſhew how it may be made moſt uſeful to us. I ſhall ſpeak a little diſtinctly to both.

I. I ſhall enquire into the *reaſons* of it. And becauſe the thing is ſtrange in its firſt appearance, and apt to perplex and diſtreſs our minds; it will be the more needful to offer ſomething to juſtify the divine conduct, remove the horror of the appearance, and reconcile and ſatisfy our minds about it.

1. There is the *Sovereignty* of the divine will. God is the Creator of the world, and the natural Lord of his own creation. *He made us, and not we our ſelves:* and *we are his, and not our own:* he has the right of diſpoſal who is Proprietor and Lord, and may do his pleaſure with his own creature: *He created all things, and for his pleaſure they are and were created.* He is an *abſolute* Sovereign, and he only is fit to be ſo; for he has an higher right to all his creatures, than they have to themſelves, or to any thing they call their own: and he is fit to exerciſe ſuch a power, who is infinitely perfect, and can never miſtake or uſe it ill. We have nothing to fear

from

from one who acts under the conduct of infinite wisdom and goodness in all his ways.

His sovereignty and dominion extend to all his creatures in heaven and earth: *He doth his will in the armies of heaven, and among all the inhabitants of the earth beneath.* Angels move at his command, and always *do his will.* And it reaches to all the disposals, and all the
Acts xvii. 26. circumstances of life: *He hath determined the bounds of our habitation, and the times before appointed:* the place of our birth and abode, and all the relations and conditions of life. Yea,
Psal. xxxi. 15. it reaches to life itself; for *our life and our times are in his hand:* the different periods of our time in the world, and of our dissolution
Job xiv. 5. and departure out of it. *His days are determined, and the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass.* He claims it as a prerogative of Deity:
Deut. xxxii. 39. *I wound and I heal, I kill and I make alive.* God acts as the proper Sovereign of life, when he removes any out of the world, in whatsoever season or circumstance: he has the *keys of hell and death*; of the invisible world, and the passage into it. And this is always a reason of silence and satisfation. When *Nadab* and *Abihu*, the two sons of *Aaron*, presumptuously *offered strange fire before the Lord*; and an immediate and extraordinary vengeance overtook
Levit. x. 3. them, 'tis said, *And Aaron held his peace.*
1 Sam. iii. 18. When *Samuel* related the terrible judgment upon *Eli*'s house, concerning the death of his sons *Hophni* and *Phineas*, he said, *'Tis the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good.* When *Job* received

received the heavy tidings of the death of all his children in a violent manner, while they were eating and drinking in their elder brother's houſe; *He rent his mantle, and ſhaved his head*, expreſſions of a deep ſorrow, *and fell upon the ground and worſhiped: i. e.* he ſhewed a becoming and a religious concern: and as ſoon as he recovered himſelf, he made this wiſe and humble reflection; *Naked came I out of my mother's womb*, the earth, and *naked ſhall I return thither: the Lord hath given, and the Lord hath taken away*, and *bleſſed be the name of the Lord.* He has a right to take his own gifts, who always retains his own propriety, and only lends us the uſe of them for a ſeaſon. Job i. 20.

And his dominion is uncontroulable, as well as abſolute; and always takes place: *Behold he taketh away, who can hinder him? who will ſay to him, what doſt thou?* And, *who hath reſiſted his will?* Nor is he accountable to his creatures for his proceedings: *God is greater than man, why doſt thou ſtrive againſt him, for he giveth not an account of any of his matters?* He is infinitely above us, and not to be arraigned at our bar; or obliged to let us into the ſecrets of his government, and the reaſons of his diſpoſals: that were for the judge to deſcend to the bar. We may ſay of the time of death, what the apoſtle ſays of another diſpenſation of providence, *Nay but, O man, who art thou who replieſt againſt God?* It is finally to be reſolved into the ſovereign will of God, and his abſolute pleaſure; and this conſideration alone, ought to ſatisfy us, tho' nothing elſe Job ix. 12. xxxiii. 13. Rom. ix. 20.

could

could be ſaid about it. But the will of God is always reaſonable, and we may, without preſumption, aſſign other reaſons of this conduct, tho' we cannot pretend to take in all his views, or dive to the bottom of his deſigns. And therefore,

2. 'Tis a point of *wiſdom*. We are born mortal and under a ſentence of death. This is the ſtate of faln nature, and the conſequence of the original threatning, *Duſt thou art, and unto duſt thou ſhalt return.* And the Apoſtle makes it the ſtanding effect of ſin,

Rom. v. 12. *By one man ſin entered into the world, and death by ſin, and ſo death paſſed upon all men, for that all have ſinned.* We have the ſeeds of mortality in our nature, and tend to a diſſolution by our make and conſtitution, tho' no accident or diſeaſe ever befel us; and we are under the ſentence of the violated law, and liable to the execution of it every moment, from our birth to our diſſolution. It muſt be executed ſome time or other: That is aſcertain'd by the divine law, and evident by univerſal experience; 'Tis *appointed for men once to die; and there is no diſcharge from that war.* There have been but two exceptions in all the generations of men for more than five thouſand years, that of *Enoch* and *Elias*, by a peculiar favour, and for an extraordinary purpoſe, who were tranſlated alive, and carried immediately up to heaven. It was a noble ſaying to this purpoſe, of *Anaxagoras*, one of the eminent *Greek* Philoſophers, upon the tidings of his ſon's death; *I knew that I begat a mortal,*

a mortal, and that he was liable to death when he firſt came into the world *.

But now the *time* and the ſeaſon of it is not ſettled by the divine law; that does not ſay, we ſhall die either old or young. 'Tis left to the divine pleaſure, and is a point of wiſdom, in what ſeaſon of life, or circumſtance of things, the ſentence ſhall take place. God is at liberty to fix the time as he pleaſes, and to execute the ſentence in what part of life he ſees fit, whether in youth, or old age. And 'tis highly reaſonable to ſuppoſe, That the *only wiſe God* chooſes that period of life for our removal out of the world, which, all circumſtances conſider'd, is fitteſt and beſt, and which we could not but approve if we knew them all. When any therefore are removed in early life, as there is nothing uncommon and extraordinary, or beyond what is uſual, and may be expected at any time; ſo 'tis nothing but what he has a right to do by the conſtitution of his law, and has reſerved the judgment of to himſelf. But more particularly ſtill,

3. 'Tis a diſplay of his *all-ſufficiency*, and to ſhew that he needs not the beſt inſtruments, and the moſt fitted for his ſervice, but that he can do without them, or raiſe up others in their room. When God takes away an eminently good and uſeful perſon out of the world, it makes a great gap, like the fall of a fair

* Nihil, inquit, mihi inexpectatum aut novum nuntias: ego enim illum ex me natum ſciebam eſſe mortalem—atque ut mori neminem ſolere qui non vixerit, ita nec vivere aliquem quidem poſſe, qui non ſit moriturus. *Val. Max. l.* v. *c.* 10.

ſpreading oak in a forreſt, or a *ſtandard-bearer* in an army. We are often apt to deſpond in ſuch a caſe, and to ſay, Religion will die in ſuch a family with ſuch a perſon who belonged to it, and was the great example and ſupport of it. The intereſt of God will ſink in ſuch a place, with ſuch an active and uſeful perſon, eſpecially, if he was of a publick character, of ſingular worth, of great eſteem and influence, and remarkably owned and proſpered. 'Tis ready to give us diſcouraging views, and make us think with the prophet, That we ſhall be *left alone*, and that none will remain to *bear up the pillars of the earth*, to ſupport the intereſt of goodneſs, and the cauſe of liberty in the world, *&c.*

But now we often find it otherwiſe, and that we judge by wrong meaſures, and from unſuitable conceptions of the great God: *His thoughts and ways are not like ours.* He ſometimes removes eminent inſtruments of publick good, to make room for others to ſtand up in their places, and fill the vacancy they have made. He raiſes up other inſtruments whom he deſigns to ſerve him, and gives them an opportunity of appearing in the world. Some by ſuch providences have been drawn out of great obſcurity, and placed in greater eminency; and drawn forth to greater activity and undertakings, than their more private ſtations did admit or require. Thus God raiſed up *Joſhua* upon the death of *Moſes*. One would have thought that *Moſes*'s great experience and authority, among that froward and rebellious people,

people, could never have been made up; and that none was ſo fit to bring them into the promis'd land, as he who in ſuch a wonderful manner brought them out of *Egypt*, and carried them thro' the wilderneſs: And yet *Joſhua* was honoured to do that, which *Moſes* was not thought worthy of. And young *Eliſha* had a double portion of *Elijah*'s ſpirit, when he was taken up from him, who was the *chariots of Iſrael, and the horſemen thereof.* The *reſidue of the ſpirit is with God*, and he can furniſh and ſpirit others for his ſervice, for whom the moſt eminent and uſeful receive all their capacities and ſucceſs. He plainly ſhews by ſuch diſpenſations, that he can never be at a loſs for proper inſtruments to do his work, and accompliſh his deſigns, who has the framing and forming them in his own hands. He can eaſily raiſe up others to ſerve him, who can raiſe up *children to Abraham*, out of the *ſtones of the ſtreet*; ſo he *hides pride from man*, and forbids *glorying* in the creature, and *no fleſh ſhall glory in his preſence*, but that *he who glorieth, ſhall glory in the Lord.* How God will ſupply the preſent vacancy he only knows; but we have reaſon to expect his direction and care, who has remarkably provided for us in this kind ſeveral times over.

4. 'Tis in great *mercy* to themſelves. 'Tis a great kindneſs to them, tho' 'tis a grief and loſs to us. Thus, for example; He ſometimes removes them from the *evil* of the world, and impending calamities coming upon it. So the prophet repreſents this caſe: *The righteous* Iſa. xlvii. 1.

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perish, and no man layeth it to heart, and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous are taken away from the evil to come. He shall enter into peace, they shall rest in their beds, each one walking, or having walked, *in his integrity.* In that case they are safely housed before the impending storm, and lodged in the ark before the deluge comes. 'Tis certainly a wise act of kindness in the great God to lay up his treasure in a publick danger, and place them out of the reach of harm. The death of excellent and useful persons has sometimes betokened approaching judgments upon the world; for good men are the greatest strength, as well as the glory of the places where they live, and their removal is like the taking the ark of God by the *Philistines*, when the *glory was departed* from *Israel*, and judgments came upon the *Philistines*. God could not destroy wicked *Sodom*, till *Lot* and his family were removed out of it. 'Tis a remarkable passage of *Eliphaz* to *Job*; *He shall deliver the island of the innocent, and it is delivered by the pureness of his hands:* That is, in modern language, for the sake of the puritans who live in it: I mean all righteous and upright men. St. *Austin*'s death was observed to be the forerunner of the terrible devastations of *Hyppo*; and *Luther*'s death was followed with the siege of *Heidleburgh*, the strongest place in the Protestant interest, and where was that noble library which was afterward transplanted to *Rome*, and is now in the *Vatican*. God only knows what miseries are coming

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Job xxii. 30.

coming upon the world at any time, and the great decay of all virtue, and the abounding of impiety and wickedneſs, is always a threatning preſage. And in that caſe, to live longer would only be a calamity, and like putting back into a tempeſtuous ſea, and venturing afreſh in the midſt of dangers, at the harbour's mouth.

Or they may be taken from the *ſnares* of life, and the temptations of ſin, which might prove a great diſadvantage to them; and from all the conflicts and hazards of the Chriſtian life, which they are ſure to be exerciſed with. Death is a diſcharge from the Chriſtian warfare, and a releaſe from all danger. When God removes uſeful perſons in the midſt of their days, 'tis very grievous and afflicting: It certainly has a dark ſide, and we are often apt to pore too much upon it. But there is a brighter and better view of the caſe which is to be conſidered and taken into the account; that tho' they are taken from preſent comforts and enjoyments, and further ſervice and uſefulneſs unto others; yet they are taken from the evils of life too, and all farther danger of evil to themſelves. The wiſe God, who *knows the end from the beginning*, and to whoſe all-comprehending mind all future events lie diſtinctly open; foreſees the tryals of continued life, and further engagements in the world; the different circumſtances of all the revolutions of time, and change of condition; how they will affect and operate, and what would be the iſſue and event. Perhaps he ſees they would be too hard for them, and diſproportionate

tionate to their ſtrength; that the ſtorm would riſe ſo high as to endanger the overſetting
2 Pet. ii. 20, 21. them, and *after they have eſcaped the pollutions of the world, they would be again entangled and overcome*; and when they have *known the way of righteouſneſs, turn from the holy command-*
iii. 17. *ment*; and *being led away by the error of the wicked, fall from their own ſtedfaſtneſs:*
Heb. vi. 4. And when they were *once enlightned*, and *taſted of the heavenly gift, fall away.* In wiſe compaſſion to their infirmity, and tender concern for their ſafety, he takes them away in the midſt of their days, and that they may not be *tried above what they are able*, ſometimes makes this *way of eſcape out of it.* How often have we ſeen inſtances of hopeful beginnings, and ſome progreſs in religion, by the weight of worldly cares, and the fatal baits of pleaſure in a long courſe of years, borne down and overcome? They are carried at length off from their biaſs, and down the ſtream, by the power of ſuitable and prevailing temptations, or greatly weakened and impaired by them. It might have been happier for them, to all appearance, if they had died ſeveral years ſooner. How many after ſerious convictions and purpoſes of mind, under great afflictions of life, or upon a ſick bed, have ſoon forgot their former vows and returned to their former vanity of mind and careleſs walk? 'Tis related in the life of the famous Earl of *Rocheſter*, that he dreaded the thoughts of living longer, and feared if God ſhould reſtore him, he ſhould loſe the good impreſſions upon his mind, not be able to

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endure the future temptations which might attend him *. Who can tell what ſome might poſſibly have proved, by a longer life of tryal, who appeared to have made a good end?

Beſides, 'tis a great inſtance of divine mercy, that he takes them the ſooner to *heaven*, and gives them their reward betimes. They are not only the ſooner out of danger, but the ſooner happy. The remaining years of life in time, and in this world, are made up to them in the glories of heaven, and the bleſſedneſs of eternity. Whilſt others live in the weakneſs and imperfections, and with the many ſtruggles and conflicts of the Chriſtian life, they are ſet free from the body of ſin, and perfectly conformed to God. They are imployed in ſinleſs ſervice and perfect love. They are ſafe arrived at the harbour of reſt, while others are longer out, and toſt in a tempeſtuous ſea. When God removes them in the midſt of their days, he prevents the further ſervice and enjoyment of life; they leave their mourning friends, and all their proſpects and deſigns of good: But then he brings them the ſooner to glory, and rewards them who have wrought only *one hour*, the firſt hour of the day, while others are left to bear the *heat and burden of the day*. He does them no hurt to take them from the good of this world, and beſtow upon them infinitely better, to remove them from their friends and comforts here below, and carry them to *Abraham's boſom*, and the ſociety of angels and

* See his Life by Dr. *Burnet*.

ſaints

ſaints in heaven. They live out the reſt
their days, which we ſpend under ſo man
diſadvantages, in a better ſtate, and what w
wanting to them in this life, is all made u
in eternal life. They are joined to the *gener*
aſſembly above, and ſerve God without a
ſinful defect, and with the higheſt ſatisfactio
and joy. And how wiſe and kind is thi
How greatly have they the advantage of u

I might add here, That God will accept t
purpoſes of their heart, and what they furth
deſigned for his glory in the world, whic
their early death prevented the execution o
They will not be loſt to them, but turn to
comfortable account; as God told *David* ju
before his death, *Thou didſt well that it was*
thy heart to build an houſe to my name. Again

1 Kings viii. 18.

5. It may be conſidered as an act of *juſtic*
and as the puniſhment of ſin. This is th
known reaſon of all afflicting diſpenſations
ourſelves and others. 'Tis ſin which pro
vokes the anger of God, and brings dow
judgment upon us: even death itſelf is th
fruit and *wages of ſin.* Now God may re
move uſeful perſons in the midſt of thei
days, in rebuke for their *own* ſin. He ma
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ces, or any notable miſcarriage and eſcape o
life, by cutting their days ſhort on earth, tho
their ſouls are accepted and ſaved. Parti
cularly for diſobedience to parents; for as th
fifth commandment is the *firſt commandmen*
with promiſe, and the *promiſe is*, That *thei*
days ſhall be long on the earth; ſo no wonder i

God

God ſometimes cuts ſhort the lives of the diſobedient, and puniſhes them with the contrary threatning, *That they ſhall not live out half their days.* 'Tis poſſible they may be taken out of the world, when they are not caſt into hell, and that they may loſe their lives for their diſobedience, when they don't loſe their ſouls, and the puniſhment may extend no further than to the temporal life. It was the general corruption of the old world, which brought that ſweeping deſtruction upon all the inhabitants of it; and the diſobedience and murmuring of the *Iſraelites*, provoked the Lord to cut off that whole generation who came out of *Egypt*, young and old, and none were ſuffered to enter into *Canaan*, but only *Caleb* and *Joſhua*, who had *followed fully after the Lord.* They all periſhed in the wilderneſs by death, tho' there is no reaſon to doubt but many of them were pious, and their ſouls ſaved in the day of the Lord: He *took vengeance on their inventions*, tho' he *forgave their iniquities.* God ſuffered *Moſes* to ſee the land of *Canaan* from mount *Nebo*, but commanded him to die there, becauſe he *treſpaſſed againſt him among the children of Iſrael, at the waters of Meribah.* *Hezekiah*, another good man, becauſe he *rendered not to the Lord according to his benefits*, and his *heart was lifted up*, was *ſick unto death*, and had the *ſentence of death in himſelf.* He breaks out in the moſt mournful and moving complaints; *He ſaid, In the cutting off of my days, I ſhall go to the gates of the grave; I am de-*

Pſ. xcix. 8.

Deut. xxxii. 40.

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priv'd of the reſidue of my years. I ſhall not ſee the Lord in the land of the living, and behold man no more with the inhabitants of the earth; my age is departed and removed from me; tho' upon his humbling himſelf, and earneſt prayer, the ſentence was reverſed, and fifteen years added to his life.

2 Kings xx.

Or elſe they may be removed for the ſins of *others.* God may take them away for our *over-indulgence,* and too great opinion and expectation from them. We may kill them with our kindneſs; and by ſetting our hearts too much upon them, provoke the jealouſy of the Lord againſt our ſelves. When we put them in the room of God, and place our confidence and hope in them, we make them an *image of jealouſy,* and no wonder if in juſt diſpleaſure, he caſts it down, and breaks it all to pieces. 'Tis probable *David* was criminal this way towards *Abſalom,* a lovely and beautiful, but rebellious and diſobedient ſon. His diſconſolate paſſion at his death beſpeaks an immoderate love to him living. And the death of his child by *Bathſheba* was the execution of the threatning by *Nathan; The child alſo who is born of thee ſhall ſurely die.* And we find God threatens the houſe of *David* this way, *Pſal.* lxxxix. He had *ſworn once to David, that his ſeed ſhould continue for ever,* and his *throne as the ſun before him.* But the Pſalmiſt afterwards complains of God's puniſhing for ſin, *Thou haſt caſt off and abhorred, and been wroth with thy anointed: Thou haſt made void the covenant of thy ſervant, and profaned his crown*

2 Sam. xviii. 33.

—xii. 14.

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prived of the reſidue of my years. I ſhall not ſee the Lord in the land of the living, and behold man no more with the inhabitants of the earth; my age is departed and removed from me; tho' upon his humbling himſelf, and earneſt prayer, the ſentence was reverſed, and fifteen years added to his life.

2 Kings xx.

Or elſe they may be removed for the ſins of *others*. God may take them away for our *over-indulgence*, and too great opinion and expectation from them. We may kill them with our kindneſs; and by ſetting our hearts too much upon them, provoke the jealouſy of the Lord againſt our ſelves. When we put them in the room of God, and place our confidence and hope in them, we make them an *image of jealouſy*, and no wonder if in juſt diſpleaſure, he caſts it down, and breaks it all to pieces. 'Tis probable *David* was criminal this way towards *Abſalom*, a lovely and beautiful, but rebellious and diſobedient ſon. His diſconſolate paſſion at his death beſpeaks an immoderate love to him living. And the death of his child by *Bathſheba* was the execution of the threatning by *Nathan*; *The child alſo who is born of thee ſhall ſurely die.* And we find God threatens the houſe of *David* this way, *Pſal.* lxxxix. He had *ſworn once to David, that his ſeed ſhould continue for ever*, and his *throne as the ſun before him.* But the Pſalmiſt afterwards complains of God's puniſhing for ſin, *Thou haſt caſt off and abhorred, and been wroth with thy anointed: Thou haſt made void the covenant of thy ſervant, and profaned his crown*

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ſence and *ſpeech* to ſome of the *Corinthians*, tho' they allowed his letters to be *weighty* and *powerful*; probably, as ſome learned men think, becauſe he was of leſs ſtature, and of a ſtammering ſpeech. It may be ſaid of ſome excellently pious, and valuable men, with reſpect to the diſregard of their friends, as well as their ſufferings from their enemies; *Of whom the world was not worthy.* But let no man think it a light matter to ſlight the gifts and graces of any of God's faithful ſervants, and grieve and wound their ſpirits by a vain conceit, or a wanton curioſity.

6. 'Tis for the *good* of others, and to exerciſe the *graces* and virtues of thoſe who ſurvive. 'Tis one of the greateſt trials of life, to part with beloved relations and friends out of this world, eſpecially in their younger years of life. When God comes into our houſes and neighbourhoods, and gives death a commiſſion to ſeize a near relation, and take away a dear friend, what does he mean by it? what is the language of the diſpenſation? Why, plainly to try our graces, to ſee how we will behave our ſelves under one of the greateſt difficulties of life; how well we will take it to *receive evil things at the hand of the Lord*, as well as *good things*. When the ſame hand which ſupports our being, and reaches out all our bleſſings, ſees fit to touch us in a tender point, and blaſts the *gourd* under which we ſat with delight, this naturally calls forth the exerciſe of ſome peculiar graces, and gives them a greater advantage; they appear in a greater

greater glory, and redound more to the honour of God. So he tries our faith and truſt in him, when he ſtrikes off our hold from the creatures; and our patience and ſubmiſſion to his will, when he lays a heavy burden upon us. When an afflicted Chriſtian can lie down at the foot of God, and humbly adore the hand, and kiſs the rod that ſmites him; can put his mouth in the duſt, and *hold his peace*, *poſſeſs his ſoul in his patience*, and *accept the puniſhment of his iniquity*; yea, can approve his conduct towards him, and *bleſs* his holy name; how highly honourable is this to God, and how glorious does a Chriſtian appear? what reputation does it give to the Chriſtian principles, and to the divine grace?

And what can be more proper to awaken our concern, and excite our diligence in every ſervice of God, and duty of life? What ſo powerful and effectual to keep a lively ſenſe upon our minds, and be a conſtant ſpur to duty? ſhould we not work *with all our might*; and *with fear and trembling*, when there is no *working in the grave*, and the *night* is approaching? when this is the only working time, and all our opportunities and helps, the whole ſtate of trial and mercy is meaſured out to the ſhort time of life, and determined by it? The apoſtle thought it meet to ſtir up the Chriſtians to *give all diligence*, becauſe he knew he was ſhortly to *put off this tabernacle*. What ſo proper as the thoughts of death, to inſpire our ſluggiſh ſouls with life and vigour, and make us more *fervent in ſpirit*, and *zeal-* 2 Pet. i.

ous

ous of good works? to keep up a lively ſenſe of religion in the world, and a conſtant care to pleaſe God? hereupon,

7. To be a ſtanding monument of human *frailty*, and give *warning* to all about them. When God removes younger perſons out of the world, eſpecially of great eminence and worth, 'tis a ſtanding memorial of mortality to others, and plain evidence that ſuch may die. Nothing is ſo ſenſible, and apt to impreſs our minds, as the death of thoſe of our ſtanding and circumſtance of life. If we ſaw only elder perſons drop into the grave, and that death always obſerved the order of nature, we might poſſibly think, that it did not much concern us, and that our time was a great way off. But God gives warning to us by the death of others like our ſelves, not only of the ſame nature, but of the ſame age and rank with our ſelves; our familiar friends with whom we daily converſed, and maintained the offices of friendſhip and religion together. 'Tis a home inſtance to young Chriſtians, and younger miniſters, when aged of ſuch eminence and worth are taken away, and they *being dead, ſpeak* to us who ſurvive *prepare to follow; be ye alſo ready.*

And to be ſure, elder perſons are concerned to take the warning; for if younger than we die before us, to be ſure we muſt quickly follow; and every perſon who dies yours loudly calls upon thoſe more advanced in life to be mindful of approaching death, and attend to the ſhortneſs and uncertainty of life.

This is a gracious diſpenſation to a careleſs world, to teach us wiſdom at others coſt, and make their death inſtructing and monitory; to remind us of what ſo nearly concerns us, and quicken our regards, where we are ſo very apt to forget.

8. Perhaps it may be conſidered as an inſtance of our *conformity* to Chriſt. As the ſervant muſt not be above his Lord, and we muſt not expect kinder uſage from the world than he met with; ſo we muſt not wonder if we are ſuffered to ſtay no longer in it than he did. Our Lord lived a private life with his parents in *Galilee*, and was known only as the *ſon of Mary*, and the *carpenter's ſon*, till he was about thirty years of age, the time when the prieſts under the law were admitted to the office of prieſthood, and the ſervice of the tabernacle; and then he appeared upon the ſtage of the world, and entered upon his publick miniſtry. And he ſpent but about three years in all his preaching and miracles, before his *deceaſe which he accompliſhed at Jeruſalem*. He had a ſhort miniſtry of three years, and a life of thirty three. And what if God ſees fit at any time, that any *diſciple whom Jeſus loves*, and who bears a great ſimilitude to his Lord, in intire devotedneſs to God, and zeal for his glory, be made conformable to Chriſt in this reſpect, and be allowed no longer time for his miniſtry and life than he had. Our Lord tells *Peter* concerning *John*, *If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?* And if he will that any ſhould come to him

John xxi. 22.

him ſooner than others, what is that to us
have we any reaſon to complain? Or do
he act unſuitably to himſelf? Our deceaſe
friend had ſomething a longer miniſtry, b
not quite ſo long a life. How agreeable is
to ſay of any of our friends; He was remove
in the midſt of his days, but he lived a
preached as long as Chriſt did, or thereabou

Perhaps they have done a great deal of wo
in a little time, as he did; and tho' no go
man ever lived to do all that was in his he
for God, but the man Chriſt Jeſus, or cou
ſay as he did before his death, *It is finiſhe*
I have done all I ever deſigned to do for G
before I die; yet they may have filled up th
ſhort courſe with great ſervice, and run o
a great compaſs of ground in their ſhort ra
Perhaps they have *begun a good work*, a
left impreſſions on the minds of many, whi
others muſt *perform* and perfect. And
they rejoice at the converſion of a ſinner, a
in the preſence of their glorified Redeeme
ſo I doubt not they are pleaſed with every i
ſtance of likeneſs and agreement to him.

9. 'Tis to make *heaven* more deſireable
us, and raiſe our hearts more powerfully th
ther. Every good man loſt out of this wor
is gained to the other; and heaven is the rich
for the death of every ſaint. They go to th
Spirits of juſt men made perfect, when the
leave the ſociety of the church of God on eart
How many of our Chriſtian friends and a
quaintance have got the ſtart of us, and go
to heaven before us, younger and elder one

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One would be tempted to envy their felicity. And ſhould not this be a powerful attractive to our ſluggiſh earthly minds, and raiſe them up above this region of ſenſe and ſin, and make us oftner breath in a purer air, and converſe with our departed friends; eſpecially, *to remember them who have had the rule over us, and ſpoken to us the word of our Lord.* Heb. xiii. 7. Should not this make heaven more familiar and more agreeable to our thoughts, that ſo many are called thither, who once dwelt in fleſh, and were dear to us, and high in our eſteem? And every circumſtance of the caſe which either heightens their value, or aggravates our loſs, that they were diſtinguiſhed by peculiar excellences; or died in the midſt of their day, is proper to ſtrengthen the motive, and affect our minds the more.

And tho' God is the chief good, the center of bleſſedneſs, and reſt of ſouls; and that is the greateſt reaſon and motive of our choice and love of heaven, and all our deſires and hopes of it; yet the divine Being is vaſtly above our thoughts, and our beſt conceptions of him are very imperfect; *Behold God is great, and we know him not.* Job xxxvi. 26. But the conſideration of the glorified Redeemer in our nature, and of our fellow Chriſtians there, is a more ſenſible thing, and a great relief to our thoughts, and is both more within our reach, and more apt to impreſs and affect our minds. And does not this make it worth the while? What a wiſe expedient is this to help the infirmities of our faith, excite the exerciſe of devotion,

to promote the heavenly mind and life, and further our preparation for heaven?

Upon theſe ſeveral accounts this ſtrange conduct of providence may appear reaſonable, and be juſtified in ſome meaſure to our minds.

II. Let me direct you briefly to the proper *improvement* of this contemplation, and ſhew how it may be made uſeful to ourſelves, either to regulate our conduct, or affect our minds: It would naturally lead us to many ſerious reflections.

1. We ſhould *reverence* and adore the divine *ſovereignty and wiſdom.* Things are ſometimes ſo circumſtanced as to be dark, and difficult to account for, and very grievous and afflicting in the diſpenſations of providence; *Clouds and darkneſs are round about him*; and *his ways are* often *in the deep, and his footſteps are not known.* He ſits encompaſſed with venerable darkneſs, and walks in untrodden paths; but then *righteouſneſs and judgment are the habitation of his throne*; and his *ways are always equal.* There is wiſdom and reaſon in the moſt involved appearance of things, and the moſt unſearchable counſels of God; and we ought to juſtify God in all his dealings with us, and ſubmit to his diſpoſals; and never to repine or complain at the hand of God, when it preſſes hardeſt, and we are moſt at a loſs about it. *Who art thou who repliеſt againſt God*, or pretendeſt to reaſon and wrangle the matter over with him? Has he not a right to do what he pleaſes with his own? Does he do us any wrong, when he

takes

takes away what is his, and calls back again, what we firſt received from him, and injoyed ſo long by his leave? Let us adore with humble reverence the myſterious diſpenſations of Providence, and acquieſce in his wiſe and ſovereign pleaſure. Let us *hold our peace*, from any complaint; or only ſay, *Let him do what ſeemeth him good*; and *Bleſſed be the name of the Lord. O the depths of the riches both of the wiſdom and knowledge of God! how unſearchable are his judg-* Rom. xi. *ments, and his ways paſt finding out!* Wait with 33. ſilence the further, and final revelation of the divine will, ſince *what he does, we know not now,* John xiii. *but ſhall know hereafter*; as our Lord told *Peter.* 7.

2. Let us *look* more to *God*, and live more entirely upon him. Let us learn this point of ſpiritual wiſdom from ſuch diſpenſations, to look at the inſtruments of any good, leſs, and God, more; and lay leſs ſtreſs upon them, and more upon him. We are very apt to exceed in our regards to creatures, and the more, the more excellent they are; and to confine and limit the holy One to particular means, and particular perſons; and we often find ourſelves diſappointed and bereaved. Let this teach us to look more at the fountain head, from whom the gifts and graces of the beſt proceed, and on whom the ſucceſs of all their endeavours depends; who gives them all that was excellent, and made all that uſe of them they were of to us, and who can raiſe up other inſtruments, and furniſh them with like abilities, and give the ſame effect. *Paul planteth and Apollo watereth, but God giveth the increaſe:*

'Tis *by the grace of God they are what they are*; and *our ſufficiency is of God.* Let us then look beyond the intermediate cauſes to the firſt cauſe, and fetch all our ſupplies more immediately from God, and live in a cloſer dependence upon him, in uſe of all preſcribed means. Eye the living God more, and dying creatures leſs: there we ſhall never be diſappointed; here we cannot fail of being ſo.

3. Let us *comfort* ourſeves in their loſs by the conſideration of the mercy it is to them. How much more ſafe and happy are they in heaven, than they could be here on earth! 'Tis well with them, however it is with us. They are ſet out of the reach of every danger, and poſſeſt of the moſt deſirable good, advanced to the higheſt honours, and enjoy the pureſt pleaſures. And ſhould not we be *comforted* concerning them, tho' we *grieve* for ourſelves? Let us not think much at their happineſs, or their early arrival at it, becauſe we want their preſence and help: God will take care of us, if we are faithful to him, and of his own intereſt; when the beſt inſtruments of earth are removed. Let not us be uneaſy that they are happy, and repine at that which is the matter of their joy. When we have a well-grounded hope of the happy ſtate of our departed friends, we ſhould rather rejoice at their preferment and advancement, at their greater improvement of their ſtate, and their happy and advantageous change; that it is much better with them than it is with us, and than ever it was before. So our Lord to

his ſorrowful diſciples, *If ye loved me ye would rejoice, becauſe I ſaid, I go to the Father.* John xiv. 28.

4. Yet we ſhould be *humbled* under the ſenſe of their loſs, and lament it as a great affliction. We muſt not be inſenſible of the hand of God upon us neither. When excellent inſtruments of God's glory are removed, 'tis a great loſs to the world, and to the church of God: All the uſefulneſs of their lives are at an end, who might have lived many years, and done great good to many ſouls. And eſpecially when we have reaſon to think, that we had any hand in it, or contributed any thing to it, either by too great, or too little regard to them; we ſhould be ſenſible of the affliction, and humbled for our ſin. Tho' *we muſt not weep for them*, 'tis their advantage and gain; yet we ought to *weep for ourſelves*, for 'tis a loſs to us, and to the world about us. And when 'tis in a qualified degree, and with due ſubmiſſion to the will of God, we may fitly lament their loſs. *Jeſus wept* at the death of *Lazarus*, whom he loved; and the elders of *Epheſus*, at *Paul*'s departure from *Miletus because they ſhould ſee his face no more.* Acts xx. 28. And the apoſtle don't forbid, but only regulates our grief, concerning them who are *aſleep*; that we *ſorrow not as others, who have no hope*; with the hopeleſs deſpairing ſorrow of the heathen world, who were ignorant of the reſurrection, and uncertain about eternal life. 1 Theſ. iv. 13. Something is certainly due to natural relation, and the tender affections of our minds, to the reſentments of gratitude, and the obligations of duty,

duty, in ſuch a caſe; and 'tis very allowable to drop a tear over the graves of our departed friends, tho' 'tis very eaſy to exceed. There indeed is our danger; for the paſſions are the unruly part of our nature, are difficultly kept within bounds; and ſometimes need all the reſtraints which reaſon and religion are able to give them.

5. It ſhould teach us to *value* uſeful men while they live, and make the beſt uſe of them we can. Labour to be better for them, and get ſome good by them, while you have them.

John v. 35 *John the Baptiſt* was a *burning and ſhining light*, in his miniſtry and converſation; and the people *rejoiced in it for a ſeaſon*; for he died young too. Conſider them as dying creatures, who may be removed in the midſt of their days, or in a little time from us; let us not loſe the benefit of their help and converſe while it may be had; but wiſely improve for ſpiritual advantage their gifts and graces, their wiſdom and experience, their kindneſs and concern for us while they laſt. Let us never have reaſon to ſay, That a uſeful miniſter and friend was early taken away, and I made no uſe of them while they lived, or was little the better for them: I now regret the opportunity I loſt, of great advantage by their ſervice.

6. The reaſonableneſs of *early religion*, and being in good earneſt in it. And here let me caution you againſt dangerous *delays*, and reckoning upon long life, and neglecting preſent duty. How natural is this in youth and health? Who is there, at ſuch an age, who thinks of

dying, or ever ſeriouſly puts the caſe to himſelf? Who don't expect to live many years longer, if not to arrive to old age? We plainly ſee this in the ſchemes and deſigns men lay in the world, which the longeſt life ſeldom ſuffices to accompliſh. They reckon upon attaining to ſuch a condition of life, to execute ſuch purpoſes of their minds, to reach to ſuch a pitch of greatneſs, and ſuch a proportion of years; and in the mean time neglect the great end of life, and are cut off in the midſt of all their other deſigns. *They reckon their houſes ſhall continue for ever, and their dwelling places throughout all generations:* But *this their way is their folly*, though they *bleſs themſelves*, and *poſterity approve their ſayings.* The rich fool in the goſpel reckoned upon *taking his eaſe*, and having *goods laid up for many years*, when he had lived his laſt day already, and that *night his ſoul was to be required of him.* What a diſappointment muſt it be to die young, to one who never doubted to live to be old; and to put off the execution of every ſerious purpoſe, till death overtakes him, and prevents it all! And let the conſideration of dying young be a powerful reſtraint from *youthful vanities* and vice. The ſprightly vigour of nature, the gaiety of mind, and the high reliſh of ſenſible good, and ſuch an age, commonly lead them to vanity of life, and forgetfulneſs of God. The ſuitable baits to various diſpoſitions, and the conſtant ſollicitations of temptations round about them, powerfully inſinuate, and take dangerouſly upon the ſenſes and imagi-

nation,

nation, which are generally predominant, an
carry them to looſeneſs and licentiouſneſs, an
preſumption and ſecurity. Keep your mind
under the ſtrong impreſſion of your mort
ſtate. Uſe this thought upon every occaſio
to preſerve your innocence, and fortify you
minds againſt the impreſſions of evil. Oppo
this conſideration to all the vanity of you
minds, and aſſaults of temptation. Sit dow
one ſerious moment, O careleſs and licentiou
youth, and conſider that death is haſtening to
wards thee, whether thou thinkeſt of it or no
and may ſuddenly ſurprize thee in all thy ſe
curity and mirth! *Rejoice, O young man,*
thy youth — but know thou that for all the
things God will bring thee to judgment. Death
Dan. v. 6. the *King of terrors*, like the *hand-writing upo*
the wall, will quickly appear, and make th
countenance fall, and thy *thoughts troubled*, an
the *joints of thy loins be looſed*, and thy *kne*
ſmite againſt one another, as it did to a gre
king, in the midſt of a ſplendid feaſt. Deat
will humble the ſtouteſt heart, and make th
vaineſt creature ſerious. Improve the time an
opportunity of life to ſecure the ſafety of th
ſoul, and promote the uſefulneſs of thy lif
and waſte not the precious moments of ſho
uncertain life in idle neglects, enſnaring diver
ſions, or bold violations of the law of God.

If men die in the midſt of their days, 't
infinitely reaſonable to be religious betime
becauſe nothing elſe can make us ſecure an
happy. Men commonly take up with th
firſt impreſſions of their education, whatſoeve
the

they happen to be; and ſatisfy themſelves with a *traditionary* religion, the religion of their anceſtors, and the places where they live, or of thoſe they converſe with and moſt eſteem; without ever conſidering the matter, or ſettling upon right grounds; neither underſtanding their religion, or making it properly their own, And it is commonly anſwerable, a mere outward lifeleſs form, or a ſudden flaſh and blaze; without proper convictions of mind, or kindly reliſh and ſavour of things; without ſincerity or zeal; without conſtancy and perſeverance, eſpecially in trials or oppoſition. But this is not a religion either to live, or to die with. Let me adviſe you to be wiſely, as well as ſeriouſly religious; upon a thorough ſatisfaction of mind, and in good earneſt. Uſe the beſt judgment you have in the greateſt concern of life: Indeavour to be well grounded in the great principles and duties of the goſpel religion, and to have both a diſtinct and practical knowledge of them. Let it become the governing habit of your mind, and run thro' all the actions of your life. Make religion your *buſineſs*; be conſtantly diligent and watchful in all the duties, and all the ſnares of life, in a dependence upon the divine grace. Let younger Chriſtians be ambitious to make up the loſs of uſeful lives, which are cut off in the midſt of their days, and *ſupply their lack of ſervice* to the church of God; that the intereſt of God and religion may ſuffer as little as may be, by the death of any who were great examples of it, and greatly inſtrumental to promote it.

And let me particularly recommend it to younger perſons to bethink themſelves of their *baptiſmal* covenant, and of ſolemnly renewing it at the *Lord's table*; to perfect their profeſſion, and become complete Chriſtians. Remember the death of Chriſt, by which you hope for acceptance with God, in the way he has preſcribed, before your own death overtake you. If you are willing to be the Lord's with all your heart, and without reſerve; and to take him, through the bleſſed Redeemer, for your Lord and portion, whom you are to obey and enjoy; doubt not of your being prepared, and fear not a gracious acceptance with him.

7. What reaſon of thankfulneſs for *longer life* and opportunity? How great is the mercy of continued life in a view of further uſefulneſs, and better preparation for heaven; to be ſpared beyond the midſt of our days, and to more advanced life, when many others are taken off in the midſt of their days? How many have we ſurvived and followed to the grave, of our acquaintance and friends, younger and ſtronger than ourſelves, more likely to live, and capable of ſervice than we were? We are *ſpared yet one year longer*, and are continued under the means of grace, and calls of mercy; and have the opportunities of further uſefulneſs to others, and improvement to ourſelves. 'Tis certainly a great mercy in itſelf, and in the intention of God; for the *long-ſuffering of the Lord is ſalvation.* Let us not alter the nature of it by continued neglects and diſ-

2 Pet iii. 15.

diſobedience, and turn it into a greater aggravation of ſin. Improve it with all thankfulneſs while it laſts, as a valuable and accountable talent. I only add,

8. Let us all be mindful of our *own mortality*, and quickened to daily preparation. Remember that you are dying creatures as well as others, under the ſame ſentence of death, and liable to the execution of it. When a good man is removed out of the world, conſider with your ſelves, " what would have " been my condition, if I had been removed, " and my ſoul had gone in his ſoul's ſtead? " Whither would death have landed me? " What would have been my lot and ſtate in " the other world?"

Let the thoughts of death quicken our preparation for it: Do ſomething every day for eternity; that you may be found in a ſafe ſtate, and prepared frame of mind; and that in whatſoever *hour of the night*, or age of life our Lord ſhall come, we may not be ſurprized unprepared; but be found *ready*, and *watching*, and *waiting*, and *looking* for his appearance.

Particularly, let me addreſs myſelf in a few words to *younger Miniſters*, whither the preſent providence particularly points. Let this awakening inſtance of mortality, of one of your own number and order, of your age and ſtanding, of your friendſhip and acquaintance, and whom ye valued and eſteemed, excite your attention and regard. Hear your deceaſed friend and brother, thus beſpeaking every one

of you: —— " Be more frequent in the " thoughts of your own death, for the *pro-* " *phets don't live for ever*, and ſometimes die " young, and in the *midſt of their days*. Be " more careful about the ſafety and proſperity " of your own ſouls, as well as the inſtruction " and ſalvation of others; that you may not " *preach* to others, and be *caſtaways* yourſelves: " And of your daily walk and converſation, " not only to be *unblameable*, but *examples to* " *the flock*. Be diligent and faithful in all " your preparations, and miniſtrations; that " you may fill up the time of life with proper " duty, and *finiſh your courſe with joy*, and " the *miniſtry you have received of the Lord*. " Let the thoughts of death, your own and " others, inſpire you with tender compaſſion, " and warm zeal for the good of dying ſinners, " and precious and immortal ſouls; and make " you ſpeak and preach as ſinners to ſinners; " and dying men to dying men. *Watch over* " *the ſouls* of others, as thoſe who muſt *give* " *an account:* Indeavour by faithful inſtruc- " tion and warning, to ſtand *clear of the blood* " *of all men*, and that their *blood may not be* " *required at your hands*; but that you may " find comfort in your preſent ſervice, and " they among whom you labour, may be " your *joy and crown of rejoicing in the day of* " *the Lord*." And may the living and unchangeable God make us *wiſe to underſtand and conſider our latter end*; and *teach us ſo to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wiſdom*; that we may be *found of our judge*

udge in peace, and may have *confidence at his appearing*, and not be *aſhamed before him at his coming*.

I have finiſhed what I propoſed from the text, and ſhall ſpeak now, as this mournful occaſion directs, of our deceaſed friend; of whom I ſhall give this exemplary and inſtructing account, from a long intimacy with him, and the undoubted teſtimony of others. And I deſire to *ſpeak the truth in Chriſt*, and would not *lie for God*. I am informed by them who knew him in his earlieſt youth, That there were manifeſt indications of a very *ſerious ſpirit*, almoſt as ſoon as he could ſpeak, and that from the manly gravity of his deportment in the firſt years of life, he never was a child. He told a worthy miniſter, his dear and intimate friend *, That as long as he could remember any thing, he remembered his being concerned for the ſalvation of his ſoul; and that he always preferred his books and his cloſet, to the diverſions of the childiſh age. He loved the converſation of miniſters and Chriſtians, eſpecially when it turned upon religion; and from the fifth year of his age, the impreſſions of the beſt things never wore off; in which he received great aſſiſtance from an elder ſiſter of eminent piety. He had a natural love of learning, and inclination to the miniſtry; and was much employed at this time in reading the beſt practical books of religion, and promoting his ſpiritual edification.

* The Rev. Mr. *Brodhurſt*, of *Birmingham* in *Warwickſhire*, Mr. *Harvey*'s native Town.

He

He was educated for the miniſtry, ſome time under the care of the pious and ingenious Mr. *John Reynolds* of *Shrewsbury*; but chiefly under the learned Mr. *Hill* of *Derbyſhire*, of whom he always ſpoke with particular reſpect; and Mr. *Jones* of *Tewxbury* *. He made a great improvement in all the uſual parts of *rational* learning, and was critically skilful in the *Greek* tongue, in which both his tutors were eminent. But he eſpecially applied himſelf to the ſtudy of *Divinity*, as more agreeable to the temper of his mind, and deſign of his life. His inclinations to the *miniſtry* were too ſtrong to be diverted by any worldly views, but grew up with him from his infancy. When his tender and prudent father feared leſt his ſtature ſhould render him deſpicable, and be an obſtruction to his acceptance and uſefulneſs in the world; he declared to a friend as his deliberate ſenſe, "That "he was willing of any pains, or any reproach "for term of life, if he might be the inſtrument of ſaving one ſoul:" Such was his high ſenſe of the worth of ſouls, ſuch his ardent zeal for God ſo early in life! And God granted the thing he deſired, without the difficulty he was willing to undergo for the ſake of it. Here he uſed to have ſet meetings with a ſelect number of fellow pupils deſigned for the miniſtry, at their ſeveral chambers, for ſolemn prayer to God for a bleſſing upon their

* I am ſince informed, That he finiſhed his ſtudies at *Findon* under the worthy Dr. *Latham*, who ſucceeded Mr. *Hill*.

tudies: a cuſtom which he afterwards pro-
poſed to ſome younger miniſters of his parti-
ular acquaintance in this city. He ſpent
many hours, and ſometimes parts of a day in
rayer; not from a ſuperſtitious fear, or as
n impoſed taſk, but for the kindly breathings
f his ſoul to God, and as a way of delightful
ommunion with him.

His *natural capacities* were excellent. He
d a ſound judgment, a quick apprehenſion,
tenacious memory; as he read much, he
tained what he read, and would give a ſur-
izing account of the ſermons he heard,
hen his retired and cloſe attention made
m ſometimes thought to be abſent. He
d a great juſtneſs and compaſs in his thoughts;
natural eaſe and propriety of expreſſion, and
great mixture of gravity and livelineſs, when
was engaged in any ſervice, in his counte-
nce, and in his ſpeech.

As to his moral and *Chriſtian* character, he
s a man of thorough *ſincerity*, of clear and
en integrity of heart; an *Iſraelite indeed, in*
om there was no guile. He was a ſtranger
artifice and deceit, and greatly diſliked any
pearance of them in others. There was
uncommon degree of genuine unaffected
ty, and a deep and habitual ſenſe of God
ible upon his mind. He was of great di-
ence and application to his work: it was
conſtant delight and joy. He was very
nſcientious in his words and actions, per-
tly inoffenſive in his behaviour to others;
hated detraction, or taking unrighteous
liberties

liberties with other mens characters and con-
duct: I remember not to have ever heard
him *ſpeak evil of any man*, in all my acquain-
tance with him. He delighted in religious
converſation, and ſeldom cared to bear a par
in any other, tho' he would be ſometime
chearful too. Here he ſhone, and appeare
with great advantage, and was moſt free an
communicative. He had a great opinion
the good which might be done by it, whe
it turned upon uſeful and important ſubjec
and was managed with diſcretion, and with
ſerious deſign. Perhaps he was led to th
by the remarkable inſtance which he told
intimate friend; That when he was a ſcho
boy, his converſation about religion had be
the means of the converſion of one who
now in the miniſtry; which account, he ſai
he received ſome years after from the perſ
himſelf. He was always inquiſitive aft
truth, and zealous in what he thought im
portant, eſpecially in what related to vital an
practical religion; and greatly lamented the
ſible decays of it among Chriſtians of all ſor
in the preſent age. It appears now, that
kept a *diary*, for more than ſixteen years t
gether, of the ſtate of his ſoul, and remarkab
providences of God; in which are many w
and judicious remarks, and the moſt devo
reflections and ejaculations, bewailing the d
orders of his mind, imploring divine aids, an
adoring the divine mercy, *&c.* A worth
miniſter of his intimate acquaintance, an
who knew him from his youth, declare

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ooks, on

" That in the latter part of his life, he con-
" ſidered him as a Chriſtian fully grown, and
" arrived to the moſt advanced ſteps of the
" divine life, which are found among men
" on earth."

As to his *miniſterial* character, he was great-
furniſhed, beyond his years, and above the
ommon rate. His diſcourſes were always
pon the moſt weighty and ſerious ſubjects;
mpoſed with great judgment, and diſpoſed
the beſt order, delivered with a manly de-
ncy, and a becoming warmth and zeal,
hich engaged attention, and gave delight,
d acquired him the great eſteem of the ſe-
ous and judicious, in all the congregations in
y and country wherever he came. He did
t affect a vain oſtentation of learning or
it, but choſe to appear *ſerious* and concern-
, as one who was in good earneſt himſelf,
d intent upon doing good to the ſouls of
en. He had great apprehenſions of the
diation of Chriſt, and the ſtanding *influen-*
of the divine Spirit, as the grand peculi-
ities of the Chriſtian diſpenſation; and fear-
that the want of due regard to them, was
e great reaſon of the languiſhing ſtate of
e Chriſtian intereſt among us, and the fre-
uent revolts from it.

When he firſt ſettled in this place, and en-
ged in conſtant work, he thought it proper
ſtudy over the *church controverſy*, and not
ſt in the firſt impreſſions of education. He
ad the *London caſes*, and other principal
ooks, on both ſides, with cloſe application

and impartiality; and ſettled at length, upo
a deliberate judgment, in the principles o
moderate nonconformity; which, he though
ſtood upon the great principle of the Refo
mation, *viz.* " The perfection of the ſcri
" ture rule, and the only authority of Chr
" in the Chriſtian church; and the unali
" nable right of every man to judge for hi
" ſelf, according to the beſt light and adva
" tages afforded him." He ſtood firm up
a broad bottom; and ſatisfied himſelf to
faithful to his light, without cenſure, or u
charitableneſs to others; and thought he h
the advantage of the narrow ſpirited on
ſides, that he could worſhip God in the w
he preferred, and at the ſame time own a
receive fellow Chriſtians of other commu
ons, and was not confined by any princip
or prejudice of mind, within any little circ
or diſtinguiſhing denomination; or obliged
refuſe actual communion, upon any prop
occaſions, with thoſe who have all the eſſe
tials of the goſpel religion, and whom Chr
will own at laſt. He was truly a *primiti*
Catholick, who loved and owned all ſince
Chriſtians; and was of no one party excluſiv
of all the reſt. He was juſt reading over th
Chriſtian writers of the three firſt centurie
when his ſickneſs ſeized him.

He had great anxiety and ſollicitude abou
his choice at *Sudbury*, for ſome time together
and was deſirous to know the will of God, b
carefully weighing the circumſtances of things
and determined to follow it, whoever ſhoul
b

be of another opinion from him. His friends generally apprehended him fit for this city, where there is the greateſt extent of ſervice, and the great reſource of all reliefs to the country; and that the work there would be too great for his ſtrength. Their uncommon value and affection to him, and the apprehenſions he entertained of greater uſefulneſs in a paſtoral relation, among a conſiderable number of very ſerious people; determined his acceptance. When he was admoniſhed by an elder miniſter, of the weakneſs of his conſtitution, he ſaid, He was willing to venture his life in the ſervice of God, wherever he ſhould call him; that it was a good work, and he ſerved a good Maſter, and he was not ſollicitous about the event. He told me, then in confidence, and with his uſual modeſty and humility; That he had ſpent a whole day in the exerciſes of prayer and devotion, for the divine direction and bleſſing upon his miniſtry; and next morning received the firſt motion of going to *Sudbury*. But they are bereaved, as well as the church of God, of his further labours; as *Paul* and *Timothy* *aſſayed to go to Bithynia, but the Spirit ſuffered them not.* Acts xv i. The *little* earthen veſſel which contained ſo great a treaſure, is broken, and we have returned it to the duſt from whence it was taken: God has determined the matter, and prevented all our fears, as well as all our hopes, concerning him.

I muſt bear this teſtimony to his memory from the moſt intimate acquaintance, and I

know I have the concurrence of my brethren, who beſt knew him; That I never knew any young miniſter of ſo ſerious a ſpirit, and ſo earneſtly ſet for doing good. He was indeed ripe for ſervice, and ripe for heaven betimes. I can truly ſay, That I never heard him without pleaſure, and often with admiration. Tho' I deſire to be thankful to the *Father of lights*, for the excellent furniture, and ſerious ſpirits, and promiſing hopes, of many of the younger Miniſters.

His ſickneſs was a ſlow *fever*, which proved fatal, thro' the weakneſs of his conſtitution, before it was apprehended dangerous. He ventured out while the feveriſh diſorder hung upon him, and much exhauſted his ſpirits in a converſation with ſome young perſons, who greatly valued his miniſtry, to enlarge their minds to generous and worthy conceptions of the divine Being. When his books were packed up for his removal, he ſaid to a friend, at the beginning of his ſickneſs, "Perhaps I have a longer journey to go than "to *Sudbury*;" and ſo it proved; for he died within one, on the ſame day he deſigned his journey thither. The ſlow advance of his diſtemper at firſt, which gave no apprehenſion to thoſe about him; and the ſudden turn upon it afterwards, prevented any expreſſions of his mind about his death; which I doubt not would have been of a piece with the reſt of his life, and a fit cloſe of it; greatly to the edification of thoſe about him. He was often heard to pray the laſt night, and ſome time

times in *Latin*; I ſuppoſe for the greater freedom of his thoughts, and that he might not be underſtood by thoſe who attended him.

He deſigned to have taken a ſolemn leave of this congregation, for whom he always expreſſed a ſincere value, in a *farewel ſermon*; as we had ſolemnly reſigned him up, and committed him to the divine bleſſing, the laſt ſacrament day at the Lord's table; for which he expreſſed the moſt affectionate gratitude. He had begun his ſermon on 2 *Cor.* xiii. 14. The apoſtolical benediction; which he deſigned to publiſh to the world, and leave as a publick mark of his reſpect to you, and a help to the underſtanding of one of the moſt weighty and comprehenſive expreſſions, moſt uſed in all the Chriſtian churches, and perhaps one of the leaſt conſidered, of any in the New Teſtament.

This was the Chriſtian, this the Miniſter, whoſe converſation and labours we enjoyed for almoſt ſeven years. I doubt not many found that benefit by his miniſtry, which will never be forgot; I am ſure we have all a great account to give of the improvement of it. And God grant that our *profiting* by the ſickneſs and death, as well as by the life and labours of his faithful ſervants, may *appear to all men*; and that we may *give our account* of them at laſt, with *joy and not with grief.*

ERRATA:

PAGE 10. line 18. for *from* read *form.* p. 11. l. 23. dele *that.* p. 22. l. 25. f. *of ſuch* r. *ſuch of.* p. 31. l. 28. f. *and* r. *at.*

An EPITAPH.

To the PIOUS MEMORY of

Mr. *SAMUEL HARVEY.*

HERE lie the Ruins of a lowly Tent,
Where the ſeraphick Soul of *Harvey* ſpent
Its mortal Years. How did his Genius ſhine,
Like Heaven's bright Envoy clad in Powers divine!
When from his Lips the Grace or Vengeance broke,
'Twas Majeſty in Arms, 'twas melting Mercy ſpoke.
What Worlds of Worth lay crowded in that breaſt!
Too ſtrait the Manſion for th' illuſtrious Gueſt.
Zeal, like a Flame ſhot from the Realms of Day,
Aids the ſlow Fever to conſume the Clay*,
And bears the Saint up thro' the ſtarry Road
Triumphant: So *Elijah* went to God.
What happy Prophet ſhall his Mantle find,
Heir to the double Portion of his Mind?

* See p. 44.

Sic Muſâ jam veteraſcenti inter juſtiſſimos
Amicorum & Eccleſiæ fletus
Harvæo *ſuo parentat*

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